

Undercover Tactics for 'Cold War'

Reported from WASHINGTON, ROME and PARIS

U. S. is about ready to adopt some of Russia's own tactics in Europe. "Operation X" for fighting Communists is coming closer.

Idea now is not to stir up revolts and killings in Soviet territory. Something milder is preferred as a starter.

But cash may go to help anti-Communist newspapers, to finance Russia's enemies and to build up U. S. friends in Europe.

"Operation X" is under wraps, backstage, waiting its turn in the developing U. S. struggle with Russia. There are signs that this project, long under consideration, is about to be put into effect.

Idea back of "Operation X" is that the U. S. should adopt some of the methods that Russia uses to win friends and influence people, as well as to dispose of enemies.

Secret funds from the U. S. are needed for the proposed operation. There are strong prospects that the U. S. Congress will appropriate cash to carry out the plan. Senator Styles Bridges (Rep.), of New Hampshire, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has brought the idea into the open. The sum of \$30,000,000 is being mentioned as a starter.

Concepts of how to spend the money for "Operation X" purposes differ sharply, however. The difference, at this stage, is between a "cloak and dagger" approach and a more businesslike and genteel operation, considerably short of the tactics Russia uses.

One school of thought in Washington and abroad wants an "Operation X" performing behind the Iron Curtain with tactics similar to those used by the Office of Strategic Services in wartime. This school advocates strong-arm methods, including assassination if necessary, to keep Russia's part of the world in turmoil. It would finance underground movements in Russia's satellite states.

The other school wants initial operations largely confined to Western Europe. This group wants to strengthen friends of America in territories menaced, but not yet taken over, by Russia. Its members

discount the usefulness of violent operations back of the Iron Curtain.

It is this second group that is commanding the most support now. As things stand this faction's ideas on "Operation X" will prevail at the outset if Congress provides the money. This is what seems most likely:

A soft approach to the fight against Communists is favored, at least at the beginning. Idea is to build up anti-Communist sympathy in Western Europe, to avoid making trouble in Eastern Europe and to concentrate on perfecting intelligence operations in Russia's sphere of influence.

In Western Europe, advocates of "Operation X" want to use the same weapon the Russians themselves employ. This would mean putting money into the hands of anti-Communists without going through any ordinary government accounting methods.

Right now, in Italy, for example, newsprint is both short and expensive during the current election campaign. Communists and their allies have just received a gift of 10,000 tons of paper from Russia. Anti-Communists, on the other hand, have trouble raising the dollars to buy paper. Under "Operation X," they would get money from American agents to finance their own propaganda.

Assistance to anti-Communist labor leaders also is favored. In Austria, Socialist labor leaders control a majority of organized workers, but lack money to use in union elections. Communist labor leaders do not control as many workers, but they always show up at union elections with impressive funds. Under "Operation X," U. S. dollars could be pitted against this Communist cash.

In France, secret cash becomes a weapon, too. Last winter, for example, when Communists tried to seize the city of Marseilles during widespread strikes, thousands of Communist workers were transported in specially hired busses from towns and villages miles away. There were plenty of anti-Communists in the same towns and villages, but they had no money to hire busses. "Operation X" would provide such emergency cash if the decision is made to go ahead.

In Eastern Europe, caution is to be the U. S. watchword at the present stage of its rivalry with Russia. Secret funds, once put into "Operation X," are to be spent mostly to aid U. S. intelligence operations, not to cause immediate trouble.

Most officials are more interested in getting reliable information out of Russia and her satellites than in stirring up short-lived revolts or in killing off Communist leaders, who could be replaced quickly.

The aim is to cover Eastern Europe with a web of anti-Communists who are not necessarily fighting men. Instead, what is more likely is the use of well-informed people to develop ways of keeping a steady flow of information moving out of Soviet-dominated countries.

U. S. strategy under "Operation X" is to supply the anti-Communists of Europe with the co-ordinating agency they



—U. S. Army

RED ARMY ON THE MARCH
... work for cloaks, if not daggers

need to keep up their resistance to Soviet encroachment.

In a "cold war," American action would be concentrated in Italy, Austria, France and Norway rather than scattered broadside through Eastern Europe. But officials already are thinking beyond this point. An effort by Communists to seize power in any of the countries of Western Europe is likely to turn "Operation X" into full-scale "cloak and dagger" activities in Russia's part of Europe.

If shooting starts between Communists and anti-Communists in Western Europe, the first concern of the United States will be to keep Russian arms and aid from reaching the Communists. Should the Communists try to seize power in Italy, for example, American agents

would attempt to cut the roads and railways leading into Italy from Communist Yugoslavia.

A Communist uprising in Austria would lead American agents to set up underground headquarters in Hungary, key to the Danube Valley.

It is at this juncture that the second phase of "Operation X" would come to the surface. With a real shooting war, the undercover campaign would be carried deep into Russian-controlled territory.

Anti-Communist resistance movements now exist in Yugoslavia and in some other countries, but they are not supported by the U. S. The idea in Washington is not to help them yet. Nevertheless, officials realize that American arms sent to Yugoslavia by submarine or dropped elsewhere in Eastern Europe could touch off revolts against Communist dictatorships.

The aim of the advocates of this latter phase of "Operation X" is to make trouble for Russia in her own back yard in the hope she will then become willing to talk about a general settlement in the world.

Under this plan, strong-arm squads, formed under American guidance, would meet Communist violence with violence. Assassination of key Communists would be encouraged.

American agents, parachuted into Eastern Europe with full knowledge that Russians would shoot them on sight, then would be used to co-ordinate anti-Communist action. Volunteers for such work, many of them veterans of the undergrounds of World War II, already are turning up in Washington to look for jobs.

Opponents of an all-out campaign at this juncture argue, however, that, if Eastern Europe were in turmoil, Russia might prefer a world war to a settlement. There is strong opposition to any scheme that might endanger the work of anti-Communists now supplying information on Russian activities behind the Iron Curtain. Fear is that Communist reprisals now might eliminate the very men who held the key to a Communist defeat later on.

Military leaders in Washington are inclined to discount the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare in Eastern Europe at this stage of events. They doubt that the opponents of the Communists, even if supported by U. S. cash, could become a serious threat to police states at any time soon.

The way things stand now, "Operation X," at the outset, is seen as a means of winning and holding friends for the U. S. in Western Europe, not as a way of stirring up trouble in Russia's territory. Outright sabotage behind the Iron Curtain is not an immediate prospect.



SECRET AGENTS . . . THE MOVIE VERSION



—Twentieth Century-Fox Photos

IN THE FINAL PHASE, IF IT CAME TO THAT, SABOTAGE, VIOLENCE, ASSASSINATION . . . Washington's official thinking now is more businesslike, more genteel

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STRATEGY FOR 'WAR III'.....P. 11

If war comes—Russia's tanks can sweep across Europe to the Pyrenees. Rocket bombs can make London untenable. U. S. will be forced to the edges of Europe immediately. Fighting will be long, costly, indecisive, possibly will end in stalemate. This article gives the hard facts as top military men see them.

FLOW OF AID ABROAD.....P. 15

Marshall Plan dollars are to turn up in pockets of U. S. businessmen, eventually. The billions to go abroad will help other nations to buy goods here. Farmers, industrialists, businessmen will benefit.

DRAFT—WHO WOULD GO.....P. 19

Young men again are likely to be taken into the armed forces of Uncle Sam. Plans call for drafting of youths 19 through 25, but deferments may be numerous—farmers, high-school students, married men, fathers, technicians, scientists.

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In this period of danger, U. S. military strength is spread thinly around the world. Here, in graphic form, is the measure of that power—or lack of power.

CONTROLS AGAIN?.....P. 22

Allocation of steel, aluminum, copper, other strategic metals will be the first step if controls again are necessary. But Congress is likely to move slowly in reviving these unpopular wartime rules.

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Sixty cents—that's what the dollar is worth today. Rising prices all along the line have taken a big bite out of the consumer's purchasing power.

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The U. S. faces this dilemma: Trade with Russia is needed to speed recovery of Western Europe, but this same trade, by

supplying machinery to Russia, helps to strengthen the Soviet war potential. Non-military trade is to go ahead.

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There is an answer to Russia's fifth columns. It involves civil disorder, assassination, revolt—a taste of the Soviet's own medicine. Under wraps right now in Congress is "Operation X," which would recall our former "cloak and dagger" men. This article shows why a softer approach to the problem is more likely.

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